

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 EB-08 TRSE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5838
INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN
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AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0411

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, SF
SUBJ: BLACK ATTITUDES: BLACK CONCEPTIONS OF CHANGE

REF: 76 PRETORIA 5912

1. SUMMARY: TO SOUTH AFRICAN BLACKS THE DEFINITION OF
"CHANGE" RANGES FROM IMMEDIATE BLACK RULE TO AMELIORATION
OF CERTAIN GRIEVANCES UNDER APARTHEID. MEANING OF THE
TERM VARIES WITH THE SITUATION AS WELL AS SOPHISTICATION
OF THE PERSON INVOLVED AND THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE PERSON
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ENTERTAINS A REALISTIC EXPECTATION THAT HIS HOPED-FOR
CHANGES MIGHT BE ATTAINABLE. IF A POLL WERE TAKEN
TODAY AMONG BLACKS, THE RESULTS WOULD PROBABLY SHOW
THAT MOST PEOPLE EMPHASIZE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT
IN THE SYSTEM RATHER THAN RADICAL CHANGE OF THE SYSTEM.
MOST BLACKS WOULD WELCOME DIALOGUE WITH THE GOVERNMENT
ON A FUTURE POLITICAL DISPENSATION. SUCH DISCUSSIONS

WOULD HAVE TO INVOLVE CONSIDERATION OF POWER SHARING. THIS IS ANATHEMA TO THE PRESENT SAG WICH REGARDS ANY POWER SHARING AS STARTING DOWN THE SLIPPERY SLOPE TO MAJORITY RULE. HEREIN LIES THE DILEMMA OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN DRAMA. END SUMMARY.

2. BLACKS TEND TO DEFINE "CHANGE" IN TERMS OF THEIR PERSONAL NEEDS. THEIR COMMITMENT TO WORK FOR CHANGE IS DETERMINED BY WHAT THEY THINK THEY CAN ACHIEVE WITHIN THE SYSTEM IMPOSED ON THEM. ON BOTH ASPECTS THEIR APPROACH IS PARAGMATIC RATHER THAN IDEOLOGICAL. UNABLE TO ORGANIZE IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY TO PRESS THE GOVERNMENT FOR CHANGE, THEY HAVE FEW ECPECTIONS. UP UNTIL RECENTLY THEY SAW LITTLE CHANCE OF OUTSIDE SUPPORT FOR THEIR CAUSE. NOW THEY SENSE THE PROMISE OF HELP DRAWING NEARER, BUT AT THE SAME TIME THEY SEE A SAG DETERMINED TO DEFEND ITS PRIVILEGED POSITION.

3. THERE ARE NO CURRENT NATIONWIDE POLLS OR STUDIES ON WHAT BLACKS MEAN WHEN THEY SPEAK OF "CHANGE." THE EMBASSY'S SAMPLINGS ARE SCATTERED AND INCOMPLETE. SOME MONTHS BEFORE THE JUNE 1976 RIOTS, DR. ALEC BORAIN, PRP MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, ATTEMPTED TO DOCUMENT BLACK DEFINITIONS OF "CHANGE" BY TALKING WITH A VARIETY OF GROUPS IN SOWETO. HE FOUND THAT BREAD-AND-BUTTER ISSUES WERE STRESSED FAR MORE THAN POLITICAL OBJECTIVES. THE BORAIN FINDINGS (IN ABBREVIATED FORM) RUN SOMETHING AS FOLLOWS:

A. FREEDOM TO GO AND TO LIVE WHERE ONE WANTS: AN
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END TO PASS LAWS, INFLUX CONTROL AND ALL RESTICTIONS THAT KEEP FAMILIES APART, LIMIT MOVEMENT AND RESTRICT RESIDENCE.

B. FREEDOM TO COMPETE IN THE JOB MARKET AND IN THE ECONOMY AS A WHOLE ACCORDING TO CAPABILITIES AND DEMAND. THIS IMPLIES A TOTAL END TO JOB RESERVAION, BUSINESS LICENSING AND AREA RESTRICTIONS, AS WELL AS THE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT MENTIONED IN (A).

C. IMPROVED AND EXPANDED EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES LEADING TOWARD EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION FOR BLACK AND WHITE. MOST BLACKS CAN ACCEPT THAT FULL EQUILITY IS AN ECONOMIC AS WELL AS SOCIAL IMPOSSIBILITY IN THE SHORT RUN, BUT WOULD DEMAND IT AS AN ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE. SOME PUT EQUILITY OF EDUCATION AT THE TOP OF THEIR LIST OF PRIORITIES.

D. AN END TO PETTY APARTHEID IN ALL ITS INSTITUTIONALIZED

FORMS. NO MORE BLACK AND WHITE SIGNS IN ENTRANCES, BUSES,
TRAINS, HOTELS, RESORTS, PARKS OR PUBLIC FACILITIES.
(MOST BLACKS AT THIS STAGE WOULD NOT INSIST THAT PRIVATE
FACILITIES OF NECESSITY BE OPEN TO ALL.)

E. EUQAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.

F. EQUALITY IN ALL RESPECTS BEFORE THE LAW AND
COURTS. AS ONE SPEAKS WITH SPECIFIC SEGMENTS OF BLACK
SOCIETY, THE DETAILS AND EMPHASIS VARY: A BLACK LABOR LEADER
WOULD LIST RIGHTS TO ORGANIZE AND TO BARGAIN
COLLECTIVELY FOR BETTER WAGES AND CONDITIONS; AN
ACADEMICIAN WOULD SPEAK OF POSTS, SALARY, AND ACCESS
TO EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES; A SOCIAL WORKER WOULD MENTION
THE HIGH CRIME RATE IN BLACK AREAS, DISINTEGRATION OF
FAMILY AND CHARACTER BY ENFORCED SEPERATION, PSYCHOLOGICAL
EFFECTS OF THE FEELING OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INFERIORITY
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AND LIMITATION.

TO THIS LIST MIGHT NOW BE ADDED A SEVENTH POINT
ARISING FROM SOWETO AND ITS AFTERMATH:

G. AN END TO PERCEIVED POLICE EXCESSES RANGING FROM
OVER-REACTION IN DEALING WITH DISTURBANCES TO PHYSICAL
MISTREATMENT OF PRISONERS AND DETAINEES. BOWDLER

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4. AS A RESULT OF LAST YEAR'S VIOLENCE, WE FIND THAT ATTITUDES HAVE SHIFTED SOMEWHAT IN THE DIRECTION OF POLITICAL OBJECTIVES BUT THAT BORAIN'S FINDINGS ARE BY AND LARGE STILL REPRESENTATIVE OF BLACK PRIORITIES. BREAD-AND-BUTTER ISSUES STILL PREDOMINATE IN URBAN AS WELL AS RURAL AREAS WITH A GREATER POLITIZATION OF VIEWS EVIDENT IN URBAN AREAS WHICH EXPERIENCED THE VIOLENCE THAN IN THOSE WHICH DID NOT. THIS COINCIDES WITH A SURVEY MADE BY PENNSYLVANIA STATE CONGRESSMAN JOSEPH RHODES WHO MADE A SURVEY OF SEVERAL WEEKS IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 1976. HE CONCLUDED THAT EVEN THE MOST MILITANT YOUNG BLACKS
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LISTED THEIR PRIORITIES IN MUCH THE SAME MANNER WHEN THEY MOVED FROM SWEEPING GENERALIZATIONS, SUCH AS "BLACK POWER," TO SPECIFICS.

5. ANOTHER CONSEQUENCE OF THE VIOLENCE AND ITS AFTERMATH IS THAT WHATEVER THEIR DEFINITION OF CHANGE, BLACKS INCREASINGLY SEE A CALCULATED INTRANSIGENCE ON THE PART OF THE SAG TO ADDRESS THEIR DESIRES. THE LOGICAL REACTION TO THIS VIEW OF SAG INTENTIONS IS A GROWING SENSE OF FRUSTRATION AND ANGER. NEVERTHELESS, MOST STILL PREFER TO HAVE A PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO A NEW POLITICAL DISPENSATION. THEY ARE NOT LOOKING FOR CONFRONTATION AND WOULD PREFER TO AVOID VIOLENCE. MISREADING THIS TOLERANCE, THE SAG BELIEVES THAT BY MAKING PERIPHERAL CONCESSIONS IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FIELD AND MAINTAINING A STRONG POLICE CAPABILITY, IT CAN CONTROL AND CONFINE DISTURBANCES TO BLACK AREAS. BUT WITH BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA BECOMING MORE RESTIVE AND AWARE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE AND ENCOURAGED BY BLACK SUCCESS IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, THIS ASSUMPTION MAY PROVE OVER-OPTIMISTIC, ESPECIALLY IF VIOLENCE BECOMES NATION-WIDE.

6. WITHOUT DOWNPLAYIN THE MILITANCY WHICH NOW EXISTS, WE BELIEVE THAT MOST BLACKS WOULD WELCOME THE GOVERNMENT ENTERING INTO A DIALOGUE WITH A REPRESENTATIVE CROSS-SECTION OF BLACK LEADERS. THOSE LEADERS WOULD INSIST THAT THE DISCUSSION INVOLVE POWER SHARING EVEN IF THEY WERE WILLING TO CONSIDER IT IN THE CONTEXT OF A TRANSITION PERIOD. FOR WHILE THIS POLITICAL OBJECTIVE MAY NOW BE OF SECONDARY PRIORITY FOR MANY BLACKS, OVER TIME THE BLACK MAN WILL NOT BE SATISFIED WITH ANYTHING LESS THAN FULL POLITICAL RIGHTS. THOSE WITH LIMITED OBJECTIVES TODAY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY MOVE TOWARD THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE AS THE LESSER ONES ARE ACHIEVED. REALIZATION OF THIS FACT UNDERLIES THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S ADAMANT STAND AGAINST EVEN LIMITED POWER SHARING AS STARTING DOWN WHAT SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICIALS
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DESCRIBE AS "THE SLIPPERY SLOPE TO BLACK MAJORITY RULE."

7. HEREIN LIES THE DILEMMA IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN DRAMA. "CHANGE" TO BE MEANINGFUL TO BLACKS MUST INVOLVE POWER SHARING. BUT "CHANGE" DEFINED AS A FUNDAMENTAL REVERSAL IN THE LOCUS OF POLITICAL POWER HARDENS THE POSITION OF WHITE CONSERVATIVES AND FORCES MODERATES TOWARD THE EXTREMES. NOBODY IN SOUTH AFRICA WITH A FIRM POLITICAL BASE HAS COME FORWARD WITH A SOUND PLAN FOR SHARING OF POWER WITHOUT DOMINATION AROUND WHICH BLACK AND WHITE CONFIDENCE MIGHT BE BUILT. BLACKS NEED CONFIDENCE THAT CHANGE CAN AND WILL OCCUR PEACEFULLY AND WITH MEANINGFUL RESULTS; WHITES NEED CONFIDENCE THAT CHANGE CAN BE ENDURED WITHOUT BEING OVERWHELMED. THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF MAJORITY RULE WILL BECOME TOLERABLE WHEN THE MAJORITY, BLACK AND WHITE ALIKE, ARE SEEN TO SHARE A COMMON INTEREST IN SUPPORTING AN ADJUSTED SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT. THE BIGGEST CONTRIBUTION ANY OUTSIDER CAN MAKE TO SOUTH AFRICA IS TO HELP WHITES AND BLACKS FIND THAT MEASURE OF CONFIDENCE.BOWDLER

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